

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJ: WEST BANK RESPONDS TO RABIN

1. SUMMARY: RABIN'S SUGGESTION FOR WEST BANK MAYORS TO ATTEND GENEVA CONFERENCE SPARKED PROMPT GENERAL TURN-DOWN FROM WEST BANK MAYORS WHO CONTINUE TO LINE UP PUBLICLY BEHIND PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN INTERESTS. WEST BANK PAPERS ARE WATCHING CLOSELY REPORTS OUT OF DAMASCUS ON ONGOING PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. REACTION TO RABIN - RESPONSE TO ISRAELI PREMIER RABIN'S SUGGESTION IN NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW THAT WEST BANK MAYORS COULD ATTEND GENEVA AS PART OF JORDANIAN DELEGATION WAS PREDICTABLY PROMPT AND NEGATIVE FROM WEST BANK MAYORS. EAST JERUSALEM PAPERS DEC. 14 CITE REACTION OF FOUR WEST BANK MAYORS (BETHLEHEM, HEBRON, JERICHO AND RAMALLAH) THAT PLO IS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL PALESTINIANS AND THAT IT IS UP TO ARABS, NOT GOI, TO DECIDE WHO GOES TO GENEVA FOR PALESTINIANS. JERUSALEM POST STORY COMMENTS THAT THIS REJECTION OF RABIN SUGGESTION REPRESENTS MERELY CONTINUED LIP SERVICE TO PLO BY WEST BANKERS WHOM IT SAYS ARE ASSERTING THEMSELVES MORE AND MORE POLITICALLY AND WISHING FOR GREATER SAY IN THEIR FUTURE. ONE ISRAELI STVORY (DAVAR) CITES
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RAMALLAH MAYOR AS MAKING DISTINCTION IN WAY RABIN AND PERES

TREAT WEST BANK - E.G. WHILE PERES WANTS TO PREVENT ALL
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, RABIN
IS, IN EFFECT, PERMITTING IT.

3. PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING - EAST JERUSALEM PRESS REPORTS
THAT PLO CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION DEC. 13 IN DAMASCUS TABLED
PROPOSAL TO EXPAND PNC MEMBERSHIP FROM 185 TO 350-400 TO INCLUDE
REPRESENTATIVES FROM WEST BANK, GAZA, GULF STATES, AND OTHER AREAS.
PAPERS ALSO NOTE THAT PFLP, PSF (POPULAR STRUGGLE FRONT) AND
ALF ARE NOT ATTENDING ONGOING DAMASCUS SESSIONS. BEIRUT DISPATCH
REPORTS THAT GEORGE HABASH WILL ATTEND PNC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR
NEXT MONTH.

4. COMMENT: THE JERUSALEM POST'S CONTENTION THAT WEST
BANKERS ARE MERELY PAYING LIP SERVICE TO PLO WHILE THEY
ARE ASSERTING THEMSELVES MORE AND MORE POLITICALLY DOES NOT
COINCIDE WITH OUR READING OF THE SITUATION. WE HAVE
NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT ALL WORK ON THE DRAFTING OF A
WEST BANK POSITION TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE PNC HAS STOPPED
WHILE WB LEADERS AWAIT A GREEN LIGHT FROM THE PLO OUTSIDE.
WEST BANK VIEWS OF THE PLO VARY. RAMALLAH'S MAYOR, FOR
ONE, HAS BEEN VERY VOCAL IN HIS SUPPORT FOR ARAFAT, IN
PARTICULAR, OF LATE. OTHERS, LIKE NABLUS SHAKA' ARE
UNSWERVING IN THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PLO, BUT REFUSE TO
REDUCE THE PLO TO ONE PERSONALITY, ARAFAT, OR GROUP, FATAH.
STILL OTHERS LIKE BETHLEHEM'S FREIJ, ALTHOUGH THEY PUBLICLY
SUPPORT THE PLO, REALLY FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH
THE KING. IN THIS SPECTRUM, WE BELIEVE SHAKA'S POSITION REFLECTS
SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF WEST BANK OPINION.
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